

## **Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting**

Of the School Board of Independent School District No. 709 held at the Historic Old Central High School, 215 North First Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, on

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

### **Members Present:**

Annie Harala  
Art Johnston  
Rosie Loeffler-Kemp  
Mike Miernicki  
Judy Seliga Punyko  
Harry Welty  
Bill Westholm

### **Others Present:**

Bill Gronseth, Superintendent  
Bill Hanson, Deputy Clerk  
Melinda Thibault, Secretary

### **Student Representatives:**

Kobi Tremble  
Paul Manning

➤ Chair Miernicki called the regular school board meeting of May 20, 2014 to order at 6:30 p.m., and the pledge of allegiance to the American flag was given.

**M-Seliga Punyko, S-Harala, to approve the agenda as presented. Upon a vote on the agenda as presented, the same was approved – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of April 22, 2014.

**M-Westholm, S- Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2014 Regular School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of May 6, 2014.

**M-Westholm, S- Harala, to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2014 Special School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of May 13, 2014.

**M-Westholm, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2014 Special Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

**School and Community Recognition**  
**May 2014**

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Assistant Superintendent Ed Crawford - Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to present Erik Thibault for recognition. Erik recently participated in the 2014 Minnesota State High School League State Speech Tournament. He competed in the category of Discussion and took First Place. Because Erik won in his category at State, he also received the Wells Fargo Spotlight on the Arts Award of Excellence - our congratulations to Erik for this outstanding accomplishment. As you know, Erik served as one of our Student School Board representatives. In that role, he spent time learning more about how our school district operates and how decisions are made, sharing information with his peers and bringing a thoughtful student perspective to our meetings. At this time I would like to invite representatives from the Minnesota School Board Association to come up for a very special presentation to Erik. The MN School Board Association presented Erik the MN School Boards Association Student School Board Member Scholarship. Laurie Knapp, Principal at East High School thanked Erik for his time and willingness to represent the students with his service on the board.

Superintendent Gronseth spoke regarding how readers of the Duluth News Tribune saw two items geared toward discussion of ISD 709 curriculum. One story outlined how nearly two decades of budget cuts have impacted music programs. The other, a column in the opinion page, dealt with preliminary class schedules at Denfeld High School. There are two pieces of information I'd like to share. First, budget funds are being invested in music this coming school year as opposed to cutting. About \$216,000 has been allotted, or the equivalent of about 2.4 full time music teaching staff, to our middle schools. Second, in regards to both Denfeld and East High School class schedules, staffing decisions are still in process and have not yet been finalized. In fact, Denfeld will likely be able to offer Spanish V next year, in part because of additional Federal funding provided for students who receive free or reduced price lunch. This funding also allows Denfeld to invest in lower class sizes, additional course sections and other supports. Investments for the September 2014 school year are tied closely to community priorities identified through Think Kids and supported by passage of the November 2013 Education Levy. For example, next year's budget invests about \$1.45 million in helping lower class sizes. An additional \$150,000 is invested in updating our curriculum, starting with Biology and with preparations to update Social Studies materials. Funds are also being invested next year into proven strategies to help close the achievement gap – such as professional learning communities to formally bring teachers together to study individual student data and identify strategies to raise achievement. After many years of public debate regarding buildings, it's good to see the conversation turned toward education and what goes on in the classroom. This is the real work of School Boards -- to be in deep discussions about what we want our students to know and be able to do as a result of their educational career in ISD 709 and how we work together to ensure all students have continued access to an excellent education, while making the best use of the resources we are provided.

**Public Comments**

**May 2014**

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Linda Puglisi, 424 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, a teacher with the schools and a parent of three Denfeld students, spoke to the school board regarding her concerns with cuts to the classrooms and the lack of balance in the high school enrollments. She asked that the school board make sure all students receive an equal opportunity and education.

Maria Puglisi, 424 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, spoke to the school board regarding her concerns with cuts to classes at the high schools and suggested using technology and being more open to other ways to create opportunities for students to take classes offered at other schools.

Andrew Slade, 1026 South Lake Avenue, spoke to the school board regarding cuts to the classes at the high schools and the lack of equity between the two high schools.

Hans Slade, 1026 South Lake Avenue, spoke to the school board regarding his concerns with cuts to the classrooms and the need to bring equity in enrollments and opportunities to both the high schools.

Lucy Billings, 1435 North 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, spoke to the school board regarding her concern with the inequity of opportunities between the two high schools and the need to level out the enrollments between the two schools or to utilize technology to offer classes to all students.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**

**May 2014**

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Chair Miernicki stated there were no communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**

**May 2014**

Superintendent Gronseth started by thanking the Students For The Future who lead a community discussion last night regarding school climate. They shared Denfeld's Lip Dub and a documentary on Diversity that was created by students at East. Both videos were extremely impressive and brought to light to some very real issues. They facilitated small group discussions using well written questions and participants had opportunities to share their thoughts. Duluth can be proud of the work these students have done; they have shown that students are a valuable source of input and that they are very capable leaders.

Soon we will be attending graduations and our graduating Seniors will starting their next chapter-- many of them will be going on to some kind of post-secondary education and tonight 2 lucky seniors will receiving a little financial help from the Hase Family Scholarship. Fred Hase graduated from Duluth Central High School in 1915. The Hase Family Scholarship Trust provides an annual scholarship for a graduate of each of Duluth's two high schools who are enrolling in a post-secondary school in the fall. Two non-renewable awards of \$2,500 each will be awarded this evening – one to an East High graduate and one to a Denfeld High graduate.

The recipients of the Hase Family Scholarship are:

Denfeld High Winner – Sam Kemp  
 East High Winner – Trygve Rennan

**Education Committee Report**  
**May 2014**

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Member Harala presented the Education Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

Member Harala presented the resolution:

**RESOLUTION**  
**Acceptance of Grant Awards to Duluth Public Schools**

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 465.03 requires a school district to accept grants by resolution expressed in the terms prescribed by the donor in full; and,

WHEREAS, acceptance of the grant in accordance with the donor’s terms is in the best interest of the Duluth Public Schools:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools does accept the below-described grants from said organizations in accordance with the terms set forth herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools wishes to extend its grateful appreciation to these various organizations.

	Organization	Author/Contact	Project Title	Award Amount	Terms
1	Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation – Duluth Public Schools Endowment Fund	Various	Various	\$14,239	Funds from these ten grant awards will be used to provide supplemental funding to enrich the academic, cultural, and overall experiences of Duluth Public Schools students and staff. See the attached spreadsheet with additional details.
	Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation – Scott D. Anderson Leadership Foundation fund	Rory Johnson	Scott Anderson Leadership Forum – Year XII	\$22,179	This grant award will be used to fund the Scott Anderson Leadership Forum – Year XII.

**M-Harala, S-Loeffler-Kemp to approve Resolution E-5-14-3180 - Acceptance of Grant Awards to Duluth Public Schools. Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.**

**M-Harala, S-Westholm, to approve the Education Committee Report.**

Member Welty suggested that the district look into other ways to offer classes more equally to students like using technology or moving students between campuses, acknowledging that could create bussing and scheduling issues.

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Education Committee, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Human Resources Committee Report**

**May 2014**

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Member Welty presented the Human Resources Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

Member Welty presented the resolution:

**R E S O L U T I O N**

**RE: Termination of Certified Hourly Staff**

*BE IT RESOLVED* by the School Board of Independent School District No. 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, that the employment of the following hourly teachers shall terminate effective at the end of the school day on June 6, 2014, unless another date is indicated below, in which case the employment of the individual shall terminate on that date.

James Bagnaschi	Linnea Lebens (8/22/14)
Mary Benko	Cassie Letourneau
Valerie Bolen (8/22/14)	Carol Mell
Mary Campbell	Joan Nelson
Elizabeth Chelseth	Gloria Phillips
Randall Docauer (8/22/14)	Barbara Rodberg
Barbara Durst (8/22/14)	Jay Rud (8/22/14)
Sandra Erickson	Patricia Schafter
Angie Frank (8/22/14)	John Schmidt
Kathryn Gellerstedt	Nicole Sederberg
Jody Greniger (8/22/14)	Charles Smith
Beverly Grindahl	Amanda Stanton (6/30/14)
Margaret Haugen	Robert Turner (8/22/14)
Ashely Hoppe	Frank Wanner (6/30/14)
Patricia Juntti	Kathleen Westholm
Byron Kuster	Michael Zeman (8/30/14)

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED* that the Clerk of the School Board shall notify such teachers in writing before July 1, 2014, of the termination of their employment.

**M-Welty, S-Selig Punyko, to approve Resolution HR-5-14-3177 – Termination of Certified Hourly Staff.**

Discussion took place regarding the resolution and the need to perform these terminations annually. Member Harala recognized all the retiring teachers and thanked them for their service.

**Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**M-Welty, S-Harala, to approve the Human Resource Committee report. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Business Committee Report**

**May 2014**

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Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the Business Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the resolution:

**CORRECTIVE RESOLUTION**

**Resolution Correcting the Legal Description listed in Resolution B-8-13-3120 Authorizing the Sale of Real Property Located at 3326 Vernon Street**

WHEREAS, the legal description included in Resolution B-8-13-3120 was incorrect;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board hereby reaffirms Resolution B-8-13-3120 authorizing the sale of real property located at 3326 Vernon Street, with corrected property legally described as: the Westerly 40 feet of Lot 18, Block 5, Bryant Addition to Duluth Third Division, Except the Southerly 52 feet, St. Louis County, Minnesota and the Easterly 35 feet of the North 101.28 feet of Lot 18, Block 5, Except the Easterly 17.00 feet thereof, Bryant Addition to Duluth Third Division, St. Louis County, Minnesota.

B-5-14-3176

May 20, 2014

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Seliga Punyko, to approve Resolution B-5-14-3176 – Resolution Correcting the Legal Description listed in Resolution B-8-13-3120 Authorizing the Sale of Real Property Located at 3326 Vernon Street. Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.**

Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the resolution:

RESOLUTION

Granting a Pedestrian Trail Easement to the City of Duluth at Rockridge School

WHEREAS, Independent School District #709 is the owner of the property in St. Louis County,

Minnesota legally described in Exhibit A attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, the City of Duluth wishes to obtain an easement across this property for the benefit of the general public and City of Duluth; and

WHEREAS, the pedestrian trail easement is generally described and shown in Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, the final legal description, exhibit, and agreement for this Easement will be contingent upon the approval of a UDC Zoning Map Amendment that will change the Rockridge property from a R-1 zone to a R-P zone as shown in Exhibit C;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of Independent School District No. 709, St. Louis County, State of Minnesota that the Dedication of the New Pedestrian Trail Easement at Rockridge School to the City of Duluth as conditioned above, is hereby approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School Board authorizes the School Board Chair to execute the final Easement Agreement upon approval of the UDC Zoning Map Amendment.

B-5-14-3182

May 20, 2014

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Westholm, to approve Resolution B-5-14-3182 – Granting a Pedestrian Trail Easement to the City of Duluth at Rockridge School.**

Discussion took place regarding the meeting with area residents.

**Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.**

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Harala, to approve the remainder of the Business Committee Report:**

Member Welty withheld Item 3.A.2)

Member Westholm withheld Item 1.F.

Member Johnston withheld Items 2.B. and 3.A.3)

Member Seliga Punyko withheld Items 4.A.1) and 6.A.

Member Welty withheld Item 3.A.2) – Bylaw 9070 Regular Meetings to note that he believes that it should not change and it should continue to allow two people to call a meeting. Member Johnston asked to table the item.

**M-Welty, S-Johnston, to make an amendment that the number of members it takes to call a meeting be kept at two.**

Discussion took place regarding the requested amendment.

**Upon a vote on the proposed amendment, the same failed 2-5 as follows:**

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**Yea: Johnston, Welty**

**Nay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**M-Johnston, S-Welty to remove the referral to the MN Statute 123B.09 Sub.6**

Discussion took place regarding to the proposed amendment.

**Upon a vote on the proposed amendment, the same failed 2-5 as follows:**

**Yea: Johnston, Welty**

**Nay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**M-Johnston, S-Harala, to table Policy 9070. Upon a vote, the same failed 3-4 as follows:**

**Yea: Harala, Johnston, Welty**

**Nay: Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**Upon a vote on the revisions, as proposed, to Bylaw 9070 – First Reading. The same was approved 4-3 as follows:**

**Yea: Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**Nay: Harala, Johnston, Welty**

Member Johnston withheld Item 3.A.2) – Bylaw 9100 – Special Meetings to ask that the number of members required to call a meeting be kept at two.

Discussion continued regarding the proposed changes to the policy.

**M-Johnston, S-Welty, to table Bylaw 9100 – Special Meetings. Upon a vote the same failed 3-4 as follows:**

**Yea: Harala, Johnston, Welty**

**Nay: Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**Upon a vote on the revisions, as proposed, to Bylaw 9100 – First Reading. The same was approved 4-3 as follows:**

**Yea: Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**Nay: Harala, Johnston, Welty**

Member Westholm withheld Item 1.F. - WADM Projections to ask for clarification on some of the data. Discussion continued regarding the report and enrollments at the schools.

Member Johnston withheld Item 1.B.1) – RFP 270 – Insurance Brokerage and Risk Management Services for Duluth Public Schools Renewal – RJF Agencies, Inc. to ask about the commissions. Bill Hanson, CFO, Executive Director of Business Services, noted that Mr. Leider would have to answer that question and he would get back to them on it.



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Member Seliga Punyko withheld Item 4.A.1) – School Resource Officers at Middle and High Schools Contract to ask if there is backup for them if they are out for vacations or illness. Superintendent Gronseth stated that it is on a case by case basis. Discussion continued regarding the resources officers and service at the ALC program.

Member Seliga Punyko withheld Item 6.A. – Expenditure Contracts to ask about one of the contracts listed. Mr. Hanson explained the item.

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Business Committee, the same was approved – 6-1 as follows:**

**Yea: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Welty, Westholm**

**Nay: Johnston**

**Other**  
**May 2014**  
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Member Johnston suggested inviting members of the community to come talk to the board about the high school enrollment/class offering disparities.

Member Welty voiced his concern with the projected operating debt and the need to discuss the issue.

Member Seliga Punyko voiced concern with the enrollment/class offering disparities and the loss of music programs in the schools.

Student Representative Tremble asked board members to make every effort to equalize the class offerings between the schools and continue to offer the upper level language classes.

Member Loeffler-Kemp thanked the students for coming out to the meeting to speak and said she looks forward to having more conversations. She assured them that the board members are out in the community listening to students and community members.

Member Johnston noted his concern to hear that people don't want to send their kids to Denfeld and asked for more information on what the cause of the difference in enrollments between the high schools is.

Member Harala stated that rumors and misinformation can cause hurt and that she doesn't believe that the East versus West perception is only a school issue but an issue within the community. She also stated that we need to work toward trust rather than suspicion and innuendo.

Chair Miernicki stated that there needs to be a study of where students reside within the district. He also noted that Phil Rannila won the Goldfine Award and thanked the Goldfine family for their continued support of the District.

➤ Chair Miernicki adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of May 20, 2014 at 9:12 p.m.